

Message Text

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44

ACTION EUR-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OPR-02 A-01 PER-05 FSI-01 /016 W

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R 311235Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 6895

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE HELSINKI 2792

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, FL

SUBJ: LOCAL EMPLOYEES' COST OF LIVING

REF: USIA 17028; EMBASSY OM SEPT. 25 TO EUR/EX.

1. USIS HELSINKI JUST HIT BY THIRD TOP STAFF RESIGNATION IN THREE MONTHS. ALL THREE RELUCTANTLY RESIGNED TO BETTER THEMSELVES FINANCIALLY. FIRST TWO VACANCIES HAVE BEEN FILLED IN ACCORDANCE REFTEL. POST SEEKS PERMISSION TO FILL THIS THIRD VACANCY, OUR PRINTER/MAIL ROOM CHIEF.

2. LOOMING BEYOND THIS IS THE FACT OUR SALARIES, TO SAY NOTHING OF OTHER PERKS, ARE NOT COMPETITIVE. AS THE AGENCY IS AWARE, WE ARE AWAITING WASHINGTON APPROVAL TO GIVE A LONG OVERDUE COST OF LIVING 20 PERCENT WAGE INCREASE TO FINNISH EMPLOYEES.

3. FINLAND'S BEST, MOST RELIABLE PAPER, HELSINGIN SANOMAT, OCTOBER 2, CARRIED A PAGE-LONG ARTICLE GIST OF WHICH WAS:

"THE COST OF LIVING INDEX IN FINLAND HAS GONE UP ELEVEN PER CENT THIS YEAR, AND THAT PART OF IT COVERING FOOD COSTS HAS INCREASED MORE THAN TEN PER CENT."

4. SAME PAPER ON OCTOBER 14 REFERRED TO AN OECD STUDY STATING RETAIL PRICES IN FINLAND WENT UP 13.5 PER CENT DURING THE 12-MONTH PERIOD ENDING AUGUST 31. THE CONSUMER PRICES WENT UP 2.8

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PER CENT IN JULY AND 2 PERCENT IN AUGUST.

5. POST UNDERSTANDS EMBASSY SENT DEPARTMENT OM ON SEPTEMBER 25 ASKING NEW WAGE INCREASE BE IMPLEMENTED OCTOBER 1. THIS LEAVES OUR PEOPLE FAR BEHIND WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN FINNISH MARKET. STATE AND PRIVATE COST OF LIVING INCREASES WERE GIVEN APRIL LAST, BUT OUR PEOPLE STILL WAITING AND DESPITE OUR REQUEST, IT APPEARS THERE IS SCANT POSSIBILITY OF RETROACTIVITY.

6. SAME THING, ALMOST PRECISELY THE SAME SCENARIO, TOOK PLACE LAST YEAR.

7. REQUEST IMMEDIATE PERMISSION TO GRANT WAGE INCREASE PROPOSED IN EMBASSY SEPTEMBER 25 OM AND FOR PERMISSION TO REPLACE NEW VACANCY.
STIER

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